DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 693 EA 020 432

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TITLE Curriculum Planning and Enactment of Beginning Teachers--Is There a Fit or a Gap between the Two?
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 20p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Information Analyses (070) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum; *Curriculum Development; *Curriculum Research; Elementary Secondary Education; Mentors; Public Schools; *Teacher Orientation

ABSTRACT

Long-term observational research was conducted in the classrooms of two inductee teachers to examine their formal policy documents, curriculum planning, and curriculum enactment. The purpose was to examine the gap between the policy and planning materials and the enacted curriculum to determine what really counted as curriculum in the classrooms. The conceptual framework of curriculum is examined as found in recent literature. "Curriculum as a situated event" is the theoretical basis of the study. The literature on teacher planning is also reviewed. The two teachers who were chosen to be studied were observed extensively for 3.5 months. The results suggest that the curriculum found in lesson plans deals primarily with events and that these plans serve as skeletons for the real lessons that occur in the classroom. It also appeared that the inductee teachers and their mentors only discussed the events curriculum, not the substantive issues during their conferences. Thirty-eight references are appended. (LMS)

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CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ENACTMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS-- IS THERE A FIT OR A GAP BETWEEN THE TWO?

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EA 020 432

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CURRICULUM PLANNING AND ENACTMENT OF BEGINNING TEACHERS-- IS THERE A FIT OR A GAP BETWEEN THE TWO?

Introduction

A growing body of literature purports that a gap exists between the official policy documents which teachers are provided and their own curricular plans and the curriculum which ultimately gets "acted out" in the classroom (Eisner, 1979; McCutcheon, 1982). Long term observational research was conducted in the classrooms of two inductee teachers in an induction program in order to examine their formal policy documents, curriculum planning and enactment and to determine the relationships between them. The purpose of the research was to examine the gap between the formal, policy document and the enacted curriculum and the planned document and enacted curriculum, and to define "what counted" as curriculum in the two classrooms. Specifically, the study examined:

1. the relationship between the policy document and the enacted curriculum
2. the relationship between the planned document and the enacted curriculum
3. the nature of the planning and decision making processes of the inductee teachers, and the impact of the mentor support on these

Theoretical Framework

The label curriculum is often used to refer to various documents which contain objectives, outlines and strategies for teaching course content. Such documents are composed of lists of subjects, or the program of studies, and are generally constructed as guides, or manuals, which teachers are given.

Some curriculum theorists have reconceptualized the nature of curriculum and have presented alternative definitions of the curriculum as a document definition. At the forefront of this movement are Eisner and McCutcheon, who suggest that the document is not "the" curriculum, and view curriculum in a more context centered way. For them, curriculum is not a fixed entity, but an active negotiation and construction of knowledge. Eisner (1979) contends that curriculum may be conceived of in broad terms as what schools teach, including the overt (planned) and hidden (unplanned, social) curriculum. McCutcheon (1982) also offers a broad definition of curriculum as what people have an opportunity to learn in an educational setting, and views it both as process and product. Other scholars, including May (1985), state the curriculum is the dynamic, communicative interaction between a teacher, students and subject matter within a particular educational setting. Weade (1986) argues for a merger of the concepts of curriculum and instruction to reflect what actually occurs in classrooms, presenting a cyclical instead of a linear relationship between the two. This study was undertaken in the spirit of this broader conception of curriculum.

Toward a Conceptualization of Curriculum in Action

In order to make visible what students had an opportunity to learn, it became necessary to examine several types of curriculum, since one type of curriculum did not explain all that was found in the classrooms. Therefore, other facets of curriculum had to be introduced. Four types of curriculum were identified within what students had an opportunity to learn; these were labeled and designated as follows:

overt curriculum - the specific, substantive material which teachers intend to convey to students

masked content curriculum - the curriculum that is intended by the teacher and conveyed to students, but often in ways other than the traditional lesson; activities "masquerade" as vehicles for carrying content

hidden curriculum - the values and norms that schools teach in subtle ways without necessarily intending to do so

social curriculum - the social interactions and norms that occur in the classroom and thus provide a message to students

When conducting a study using the above theoretical framework, one must begin by entering a classroom and observing what students have an opportunity to learn. Such direct observation, however, sheds light on only one part of what is made available to students and does not present the total picture. Therefore, it was also necessary to examine formal policy documents and teacher constructed curricular plans in order to see how these constrained or delimited what occurred in the classrooms. For the purposes of this study, the planned document referred to the teachers' planned, or intended content, which generally consisted of daily and weekly lesson plans. The policy document referred to the objectives, goals and content which were provided to the teachers by the school district in a formal course of study. This study examined not only what was enacted in the classroom, but also traced back to see these two earlier facets of the curriculum in order to determine how these impacted on what occurred in the classrooms and on what students had an opportunity to learn.

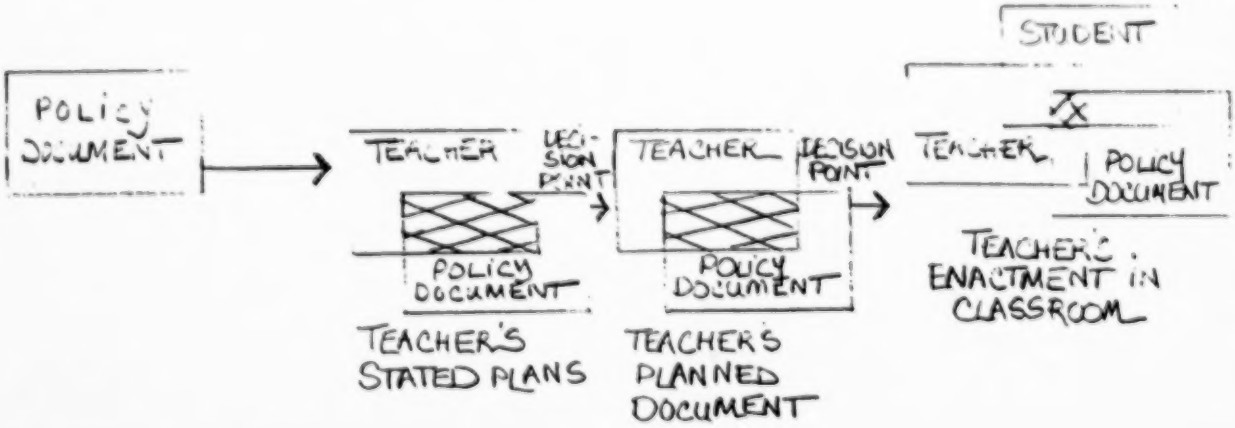
Toward a Redefinition of Curriculum as Curriculum in Practice

There have been few attempts to build a coherent picture of curriculum as curriculum delivery by following the entire process from start to finish within

a given environment. In order to facilitate this, it was necessary to examine the transformation of the curriculum from formal policy document to teachers' planned document to what occurred in the classroom, and the ways that the documents impacted on what students had an opportunity to learn. What appeared to be missing was a model, or a way of thinking about curriculum, that viewed the entire range of the process from the policy document that a school has, to the teachers' planned document, to its enactment by a teacher in a classroom.

The conceptual model that guided this study was a dynamic one which viewed the curricular process as an ongoing series of movements and decision points, starting with the policy document and ending with its enactment in the classroom. In this model of curriculum, there is movement from a sole, policy document, to the teacher interacting with it to form a planned document, and finally, with both students and teacher interacting with it as it is enacted. specific decisions are made by teachers throughout, as they move from receiving the policy document to enactment in the classroom. It is by examining these documents and enactment, and the interrelationship of these, that a partial picture may be painted about some of the processes that impact on what occurs in classrooms. The model is indicated in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Model of Curriculum



It is by tracing the steps and decision points in this model that more information may be obtained about the nature of the curriculum, or what curriculum is, in classrooms.

The Literature Base

Since this was a study of curriculum, the literature on conceptions of curriculum was pertinent to help more clearly define curriculum in a broader sense, as it occurs in classrooms. The literature reviewed consisted for the most part of various philosophical perspectives taken by those who study the field, since little empirical research has been conducted on curriculum in classrooms with teachers. As Walker (1981) states, "We in the field of curriculum have failed to conduct the empirical research needed to clarify the nature of the phenomena and problems we address" (p. 282). This paucity of curriculum research is due, in part, by confusion in the field about the use of the term "curriculum," as well as the failure in the field to view curriculum as anything but apart from instruction.

One conception of curriculum which emerged in the early 1900's and is still prevalent today is a view of curriculum as a technological system of production. One of the early proponents of such a view was Bobbitt (1918). Johnson (1967) also assigns a linear view to curriculum and views it as the output of one system (curriculum system) and an input into another system (instructional system). Gagne (1967) also embraces this view and contends that curriculum is a "sequence of units arranged in such a way that the learning of each unit may be accomplished as a single act, provided the capabilities described by specified prior units have already been mastered by the learner" (p. 23).

Other traditional, rationalistic views conceived of curriculum in a narrow sense, often limiting it to a specific document or program of studies. Such subject-centered views, as exemplified by Hutchins (1936) and Bestor (1956), reflect the notion that any curriculum has to include the "greats" in terms of the organized body of knowledge that had been accumulated in the world.

Yet another view was that of the curriculum as a vehicle for transferring the experiences of the race to the next generation. One aspect of this view was exemplified by Smith, Stanley and Shores' (1957) definition of curriculum as "A sequence of potential experiences set up in the school for the purpose of disciplining children and youth in group ways of thinking and acting" (p. 3). Dewey (1902) served as one of the proponents of a child-centered curriculum, and stated, "Abandon the notion of subject matter as something fixed and ready-made in itself, outside the child's experience as something hard and fast . . . and we realize that the child and the curriculum are simply two limits which define a single process. Just as two points define a straight line" (p. 11). Caswell and Campbell (1935) also do not limit the curriculum to a formal document or course of study, but conceptualized it in broader terms. They state that curriculum is ". . . composed of all the experiences children have under the guidance of teachers" (p. 66).

During the 1960's and 70's, the notion of curriculum as an instructional plan emerged, suggesting that curriculum is a form of a plan for meeting objectives and goals. Taba (1962) states that "A curriculum is a plan for learning" (p. 214). Popham and Baker (1970) also view curriculum as a plan, and state that it is "all planned learning outcomes for which the school is responsible . . ." (p. 48). Saylor and Alexander (1974) state that curriculum is "A plan for providing sets of learning opportunities to achieve broad goals

and related specific outcomes for an identifiable population served by a single school center" (p. 6).

Each of the conceptions of curriculum described above was problematic in terms of this study because limiting the curriculum to course lists and subject matter designations reveals little about actual classroom occurrences, and the ways in which experiences are provided for students. There is a current trend in the field to move toward reconceptualizing curriculum in a broader sense. These views hold that the curriculum is not merely a document, but is comprised of many elements which form the whole curricular process. Eisner (1979) defines curriculum as "a series of planned events that are intended to have educational consequences for one or more students" (p. 39). This definition implies that more than one event occurs and that there is an aim or purpose of the curriculum which is educational. Yet by the use of the term "consequences," Eisner allows for the existence of results or products that may be unintended. McCutcheon (1982) views curriculum as both product and process, and argues for the broad definition that curriculum is "what students have an opportunity to learn in an educational setting, through both the hidden and overt curriculum, and what they do not have an opportunity to learn because certain matters were not included in the curriculum" (p. 2). McCutcheon (1988) views curriculum and teaching as entwined and states that ". . . curriculum affects and is affected by teaching, and the opposite is also true. So, the medium and the message have a close relationship rather than being neatly separable" (p. 1). Weade (1987) raises questions about the relationship between curriculum and instruction, and presents a model for merging the two concepts in a cyclical, continuous relationship, which she labels "curriculum 'n instruction" (p. 17).

King (1986) comes closest to forwarding the conception of curriculum that undergirds this study. She presents the thesis that "Curriculum is a situated event" (p. 36), and proceeds to state "When curriculum is viewed as an event, its essence cannot be captured in or equated with a lesson plan or a curriculum guide. Rather, the curriculum is what happens when the lesson plan becomes the basis for a classroom activity. The interactions of classroom participants with the material environment, skills and ideas, and each other are all aspects of what comes to be labeled the curriculum" (p. 36).

A second literature base that was relevant to the research was the literature on beginning teachers, teacher induction and teacher mentoring, since the two teachers observed were inductee teachers who were participants in an Induction Program. The tone of the literature on beginning teachers is not pleasant. Howey, Matthes and Zimpher (1985) state, ". . . new teachers arrive in classrooms ill equipped to handle the 'regular duties' of teaching and the concomitant reality shock of the first year of teaching" (p. 61). Ryan (1984) offers vivid accounts of the first years of teaching, depicting a wide range of concerns, problems and issues at this point in career development. McLaren (1970) states, "Most beginning teachers can often do little more than struggle through their new world of pupil personalities and unfamiliar subject matter" (p. 64). Gere (1980) also reinforces this same notion as he states, "The new teacher, trained in pools, doesn't even know how to survive, much less ride the waves" (p. 88).

One of the major areas of concern for beginning teachers is curricular planning and instructional knowledge. Blase and Greenfield (1982) found areas of concern for beginning teachers were knowledge of subject matter and how to teacher it, managerial tasks, daily planning, and knowledge of teaching.

Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) found eighteen dilemmas common to the beginning teachers studied which fell into four categories: teacher knowledge and the curriculum, teacher's role, teacher-pupil relationships, and student diversity.

Recommendations for programs which support beginning teachers are rampant in the literature. Housten and Felder (1982) surmise that "New teachers must be inducted into the profession humanely, in ways that engender pride, openness and increased professional competence and stature" (p. 450). From their extensive study of first year teachers, Grant and Zeichner (1981) recommend personalized and individualized induction programs, geared to the needs of specific beginning teachers. Due to this state of affairs, the literature documents many Induction Programs currently in existence to support beginning teachers (Burke and Schmidt, 1984; Shalaway, 1985; Howey, Matthes and Zimpher, 1985).

A third body of literature which impacted on this study is the literature on teacher planning. Although research about the process of curriculum planning is scarce, a few significant studies about it have been conducted. There is a general consensus in the literature that planning is "preparations that teachers make for teaching" (Calderhead, (1984), and can include a wide variety of activities. Although Tyler (1949) presented a linear model of curriculum planning, more recent research on teacher planning has shown that teachers generally do not follow this type of model, but go about planning in a less systematic manner. Borko and Shavelson (1983) state, "The prescriptive model is consistently not used in teachers' planning in schools" (p. 218). Zahorik (1975) also echoes this view that behavioral objectives do not seem to be an important component of teacher planning. Yinger (1977) found that ". . . each planning event draws from prior planning and teaching experiences and that

each teacher event feeds future planning and teaching processes" (p. 11). The literature also states that beginning teachers, in particular, have difficulties with planning and implementing instruction (Pajak and Blase, 1982; Clark and Peterson, 1985; Davis and Zaret, 1984).

Research Design and Methodology

The general research approach for this study was descriptive qualitative research in the tradition of Guba and Lincoln (1985) and Bogdan and Biklen (1982). This perspective was chosen because sustained, systematic observation had to be undertaken in order to determine how the two teachers' plans and decisions got "acted out" in the classroom. This research methodology permitted systematic documentation of the opportunities that students had to learn. A second reason qualitative methodology was appropriate for this study was that in order to analyze factors that impacted on the enacted curriculum, it was necessary to be able to move across different types of data. Third, qualitative methodology permitted the researcher to gain access to the perspectives of the two teachers about planning through in-depth interview.

The population for this study was inductee teachers who were each paired with mentor teachers in a collaborative project between a major university and five local surrounding school districts. The study was conducted during the first year of this three year project, which is currently in its third year. One district was selected from the five districts which were participating in the project for the purposes of this study. In particular, two inductee teachers and their mentors were selected from one of the schools within that district for case study.

This project was chosen as the population for this study because it provided a unique opportunity for studying inductee teachers. Since the project had set up reflectivity as a basis for the examination of teaching, the research conducted here already had teachers who were willing to be reflective and collaborate with the researcher. The study was undertaken in the classrooms of two inductee teachers because there is a need for research about the curricular concerns of inductee teachers and how they transform policy documents and plans into practice. Studies of curriculum planning have not focused on inductee teachers, yet these teachers must deal with new policy documents and curricular procedures.

In particular, the two teachers studied, one a first grade teacher and the other a DH teacher, were inductee teachers, beginning teachers, since one teacher had tutored several years prior, while the other teacher had taught a different grade level for ten years. Thus, neither teacher was newly out of a teacher preparation program; both were transition teachers. This type of an inductee teacher was chosen because although the research focus heretofore in the literature has been on those teachers just out of teacher preparation programs, there is a new, growing group of teachers which includes not only those teachers, but also teachers who are beginning a new phase. A Needs Assessment Instrument administered to participants in this Induction Program showed that the pattern of concerns was the same across beginning teachers and inductee teachers.

The researcher was in the field site for three and a half months, five days each week, three hours each day, and conducted systematic data gathering for each teacher. Data were collected in the form of fieldnotes, audio

transcripts, lesson plans, policy documents, interview responses, students' work and curricular resources.

Since the central focus of the study was the relationship between the policy document and the enacted curriculum and the teachers' planned document and the enacted curriculum, each of these had to be laid out and examined in order to search for patterns in them. Therefore, the basic data analysis technique for this study was a type of ethnographic analysis termed "domain analysis." In domain analysis, the data are searched for kinds of categories using semantic relationships as tools by which to derive consistencies and patterns in the data. The semantic relationship used was strict inclusion (X is a kind of Y), in order to get at the parts, or elements, which comprised the total day, and thus, the curriculum. Data were organized by noting instances, or subcategories, for each category or activity. Next, the fieldnotes were collapsed to include the following for each activity during the day: time, where, who, curricular content, activity description, and data source. This provided a detailed breakdown of the activities for each day that was observed, and facilitated examining the activities across time in order to determine the frequency of activities, the pattern of the day, and the variability/consistency across days. This helped to define a "typical" day, which yielded information about what students were exposed to, and thus defined the enacted curriculum in the two classrooms. This enacted curriculum was then compared with the policy document and the teachers' planned curricular document to determine the relationships between them.

Findings of the Study

The purpose for the examination of the enacted curriculum, the teachers' planned curriculum, and the policy documents was to provide a basis for determining the "gap," or relationship, between the curriculum which was prescribed and planned, and that which was enacted in the classrooms. Findings for both inductee teachers indicate that the teachers' planned curriculum had little detail, and was a skeleton representing the sequence of activities for the day. Creative or spontaneous activities were not included in the planned curriculum. The planned curriculum did not reflect the richness of the enacted curriculum so that there was a gap between the two.

There was also a gap between the inductee teachers' policy document and enacted curriculum. All that was included in the policy document was carried out in the classroom, but both teachers went beyond these documents and provided students with information, activities, skills and meanings which were not included in them.

Both teachers' curricular plans and policy documents appeared to be reduced to a set of activities, or an agenda for "doings." These activities, however, served to trigger other activities. Thus, the teachers' policy documents and plans were a minimal curriculum, and did not reflect the complexity of the enacted curriculum.

Conclusions from the Study and Implications for Future Research

One significant outcome of the research was the identification of curriculum as it occurs in the everyday lives of classrooms. What children encountered as curriculum was <u>what was</u>, instead of someone's idea of what curriculum was. This conception of curriculum as an "event" highlights a need

for further investigation into the nature of curriculum in the real life setting of classrooms.

The study generated a unique type of curriculum which occurred in the classrooms heretofore not evidenced in the literature: masked content curriculum. Activities "masqueraded" as one thing, such as Sharing, but also served to convey substantive information. This raises questions about the nature of activities in classrooms which carry such masked content. Do these activities really teach substantive content? How is non-academic time spent in classrooms?

Since the teachers' formal policy documents and plans served only as skeletons for what actually occurred in the classrooms, questions must be raised about the nature of formal policy documents as well as plans. Are formal policy documents obsolete? Can they be quality documents? Who are they for? What "counts" as planning? Of what value and use are plans? Are they mock plans? For whom do teachers plan? The existence of a gap between the teachers' policy documents and enacted curriculum and plans and enacted curriculum raises questions for future research to see if there is a gap, and if so, to determine what factors contributed to it. There is also a need to strengthen pre-service teachers' awareness about the interrelationship of the policy document and plans with the enacted curriculum.

One of the conclusions from the study in terms of teacher induction was that the inductee teachers and mentor teachers were not discussing curricular or substantive issues, but that the major mentor support was for the "doing" of school. Inductee teachers discussed personal concerns with their mentors. Since the literature contends that beginning teachers find informal support for dealing with such concerns, one wonders how there could be a more substantive

focus to the inductee-mentor teacher relationship. Thus, the questions become: How can Induction Programs help teachers to ask more substantive questions? Is it possible for inductee teachers to focus on curriculum during the first year? The curriculum of mentoring in Induction Programs must be scrutinized and ways found to include a focus on curriculum.

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